

Introduction

For over 30 years, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has been an integral part of Washington's public health system. Promoting healthy habits early, when they make the most powerful difference in the lifelong health of a child, is what WIC is all about. With each new eligible family WIC reaches, public health grows stronger and more effective in the fight against obesity and other debilitating and life threatening conditions.

WIC facts

- Every year, families with young children and expectant mothers participating in the program purchase over \$103 million of food at local grocery stores with their WIC checks.
- Each year WIC provides 268,000 women and children in need of preventive health services with healthy foods, breastfeeding support, nutrition education and improved access to health services.
- WIC serves 49% of all infants born in Washington. In rural counties, WIC serves 65% of all infants born.
- WIC is leading the way in breastfeeding – the 6 month breastfeeding rate for WIC mothers in Washington is significantly higher than the national average.
- WIC has several cost containment initiatives including a competitive bid process for purchasing infant formula that saves more than \$24 million each year and a food approval process that uses price as an important criterion.

WIC opens the door to a healthy future!

- WIC is good for babies. Everything WIC does focuses on helping families seize the opportunity to give their babies a healthy start – keeping the promise and potential of a bright future alive.
- WIC is good for kids. With WIC, parents and children learn together to eat healthy and stay active, setting the stage for success in school and life.
- WIC is good for families. For families living with limited income, meeting basic needs is challenging and means making difficult choices. With WIC's help, parents can provide their kids with the nutritious foods they need to stay healthy.
- WIC is good for the economy. WIC strengthens local economies through grocery store sales that have exceeded a billion dollars over the past 30 years.

How to contact WIC

Visit www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/wic to find more information about Washington WIC. You can also call 1-800-841-1410, or write PO box 47886 Olympia, WA 98504-7886.



Highlights of changes for this contract period

WIC is required to make changes when necessary for the operation of the program. Changes generally come from federal regulation or federal guidance. When program changes affect the retail food delivery system, Washington WIC tries to coordinate it with the retailer contract period. The new WIC retailer contract (effective April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2009) includes many changes. Some changes affect the retail owner and there are several that affect grocery checkers. Store bookkeepers also need to know about any changes. A copy of the contract is included in this handbook. Highlights of the changes are:

Grocery checkers: Three changes affect grocery checkers. You will see two initial changes during the retailer contract period April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2009.

- 1) The first change is the WIC check color. WIC will begin issuing a salmon-colored WIC check April 1, 2006. The check cashing procedure for the salmon-colored check is the same as the procedure used for the green WIC checks.
- 2) The second change is in the list of WIC approved foods. There are additions and deletions to juice and infant formula, and deletions to cheese and tuna. All other food categories remain the same. The new WIC foods are in the new salmon-colored food brochure, and in this handbook. WIC approved foods begin on page 8.
- 3) The third and most significant change is the implementation of an entirely new WIC check and check cashing procedure during the summer of 2006. The new check is multi-colored. It will replace the initial salmon-colored check. This check will require the retailer to stamp the check with a stamp identification provided by WIC. WIC will give you advance notice of when we will begin using the check, provide you with the stamp identification and information you will need to process the check.

Store owners/managers: In addition to the above changes affecting grocery checkers, you need to pay attention to several changes to comply with the contract requirements.

- 1) You must report prices of WIC foods quarterly, and every time infant formula prices change.
- 2) Your store is assigned to a peer group. You must keep prices of individual WIC foods at, or less than, the maximum price for your peer group.
- 3) You are required to report gross food sales and provide documentation to WIC on request.
- 4) You are required to keep documentation that shows where you buy infant formula, the dates of purchase, the quantities and the brand names, sizes, and types.
- 5) You are required to keep documentation of the WIC training for your store.

Bookkeepers: Be aware of the WIC checks. Use the references, including this handbook, for deposit procedures to assure payment.

How to **get the most** out of this handbook

This handbook contains the information needed by store employees to comply with the WIC contract, process WIC checks for payment and assure WIC that customers will get the approved food in the quantities they need.

How this handbook is organized: The handbook is organized into tabbed sections. The content of each section is listed in the table of contents. WIC foods and WIC check cashing procedures are tabbed separately within the grocery checker section for easy reference.

Keep the handbook available for employees: The contract requires each store to keep two copies of the WIC Retailer Handbook in a place where employees can find them. It is a good idea to keep one in the front of the store for reference.

Use the handbook for training: The handbook contains the seven required elements for WIC training. The training elements are listed in the Store Owner Section. Details of the training elements are located throughout the handbook. The open book quiz found in the appendix will guide you through the seven training elements. Use the training log to record who has used the quiz and read through the handbook.

